

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 ABU DH 00156 131158Z
ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5480

S E C R E T ABU DHABI 0156

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MASS,TC,US
SUBJ: UAE REQUEST FOR TOW'S

REF: (A) 76 ABU DHABI 2135, (B) 76 ABU DHABI 2102, (C) 76 ABU DHABI
1911

1. SUMMARY: UAE DEFENSE FORCES ARE STILL INTERESTED
IN ACQUIRING TOW ANTI-TANK MISSILE AND DEPUTY
COMMANDER SHAIKH KHALIFA HAS REQUESTED A RESPONSE.
END SUMMARY.

2. DURING MY COURTESY CALL ON JANUARY 11 ON SHAIKH KHALIFA
BIN ZAYID, CROWN PRINCE OF ABU DHABI EMIRATE AND DEPUTY
COMMANDER OF UAE DEFENSE FORCES, HE ASKED ME WHAT HAD
HAPPENED TO UAE REQUEST TO ACQUIRE TOW ANTI-TANK MISSILES.
KHALIFA, WHO WAITED UNTIL WE WERE ALONE AFTER HAVING
DISMISSED ALL HIS ADVISORS, RECALLED HIS EARLIER CONVERSA-
TIONS WITH AMBASSADOR STERNER (REF C). HE EMPHASIZED THAT UAE
WAS NOT TRYING TO BECOME A MAJOR MILITARY POWER AND WAS
INTERESTED ONLY IN HAVING A SMALL FORCE CAPABLE OF PROVIDING
INTERNAL SECURITY AND SOME DETERRENCE AGAINST A POTENTIAL
THREAT. PRINCIPAL MOVE AT MOMENT WAS TO INTEGRATE ARMED
FORCES OF ALL EMIRATES. AS HAD BEEN DEMONSTRATED DURING
RECENT NATIONAL DAY PARADE (ABU DHABI'S A-85), UAE DEFENSE
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FORCES NOW HAD COMMON UNIFORM (AND COMMON WEB GEAR), COMMON
EMPLEMS, AND STEPS HAD BEEN TAKEN TO HAVE UNIFORM PAY SCALES.

3. KHALIFA SAID HE APPRECIATED US RESPONSE ON WEB GEAR AND
WAS PLEASED WE WERE WILLING TO SELL M-16 RIFLE (ALTHOUGH HE DID NOT
INDICATE WHETHER UAEDF WOULD CHOOSE THIS AS ITS BASIC INFANTRY
WEAPON) BUT UAE ARMED FORCES STILL NEEDED SOME FORM OF MODERN

ANTI-TANK CAPABILITY FOR ITS INFANTRY UNITS. HE REMARKED THAT USG HAD SOLD TOW ANTI-TANK MISSILES TO SAUDI ARABIA, JORDAN, KUWAIT, IRAN, AND OMAN. WHILE HE WAS NOT SUGGESTING THAT UAE ANTICIPATED THREAT FROM EITHER SAUDI ARABIA OR OMAN, HE THOUGHT IT UNUSUAL THAT US SHOULD PROVIDE THIS SYTEM TO UAE'S NEIGHBORS BUT NOT UAE ITSELF. HE APPRECIATED MY ARGUMENTS THAT SAUDI ARABIA AND IRAN HAD SPECIAL DEFENSE RESPONSIBILITIES AND THAT TOWS WERE SOLD TO OMAN AT TIME WHEN DHOFAR WAR WAS UNDERWAY AND THERE WAS POSSIBILITY THAT PDYR COULD USE ITS TANKS DURING LAST STAGES OF DHOFAR CAMPAIGN. HOWEVER, HE SAID UAE CONSIDERED TOW TO BE BASIC INFANTRY WEAPON. HE ALSO MENTIONED AS AN ASIDE, THAT SHAIHK ZAYID HAD SEEN THE TOW ON DISPLAY WHEN HE LAST VISITED MUSCAT FOR OMANI NATIONAL DAY CELEBRATIONS. HE HOPED THEREFORE THAT USG COULD AGAIN RECONSIDER ITS POSITION REGARDING SALE OF TOWS.

4. COMMENT: IT IS CLEAR THAT UAEG, PROBABLY FROM SHAIKH ZAYID DOWN, SEE US WILLINGNESS TO SELL TOWS AS AN INDICATION OF US INTEREST IN UAE SECURITY AND KNITTING TOGETHER OF ARMED FORCES. JUSTIFICATION FOR SALE OF TOWS HAS BEEN MADE ELOQUENTLY AND CONVINCINGLY BY MY PREDECESSOR (REF A) AND I BEJTZTNA OWE UAE AN ANSWER. PRIOR TO MY DEPARTURE, WORKING PAPER HAD BEEN APPROVED WITHIN NEA BUREAU AND BY PM AND ACDA THAT PROPOSED AN FMS SALE OF 12 TOW LAUNCHERS, 200 PRACTICE MISSILES AND 100 LIVE MISSILES TO UAEDF WHICH WOULD BE ENOUGH TO EQUIP TWO PLATOONS, EACH TO BE ASSIGNED TO TWO LARGEST INFANTRY UAEDF UNITS AND ENOUGH TO PROVIDE ADEQUATE TRAINING. BELIEVE OFFER OF THIS KIND WOULD MEET BASIC UAEDF REQUIREMENTS AND NOT RESULT IN ANY MAJOR DEVIATION IN

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US ARMS POLICY FOR LOWER GULF. LIKE IT OR NOT, UAE IS BECOMING AN INCREASINGLY IMPORTANT OIL PRODUCING COUNTRY AND HAS MORE AND MORE VALUABLE RESOURCES TO PROTECT. DICKMAN

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NNN

Message Attributes

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